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LETTER DATED 15 SEPTEMBER 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to enclose herewith a facsimile letter dated 9 September 1992 from the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudman.

We would kindly request that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ambassador Dr. Mario NOBILO
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Croatia to the
United Nations

Annex

Letter dated 9 September 1992 from the President of the Republic of Croatia addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Republic of Croatia and in my own name, I would once again like to thank you for your support and assistance along the difficult road towards the establishment and preservation of peace in Croatia.

Nevertheless, I would at this point in time like to draw your attention to certain important facts, and urge additional decisions of the Security Council in order to enhance efficiently as much as possible the implementation of the peace plan of Mr. Cyrus Vance.

1. The objective of the Vance Plan as contained in annex III to the Secretary-General's report of 11 December 1991 (S/23280), in accordance with which demilitarization of the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) is under way, is the return to their homes - in line with established United Nations policy - of all persons displaced during the hostilities wishing to do so (para. 20).

This process should be implemented as fast as possible, but it is not being implemented with the required urgency. Serbs in the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia (UNPAs) turn down or delay the implementation of the UNPA demilitarization process, which includes the withdrawal of the units of the former Yugoslav army, the disbanding and demobilization of local units, the surrender of weapons and their placement in custody, and the removal of mines and fortifications.

2. To this very day the Republic of Croatia is being attacked and ravaged by Serbian forces from the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

According to the latest data of the Office for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Republic of Croatia (26 August 1992), Croatia is caring for 635,781 registered displaced persons and refugees (267,500 displaced persons and 368,281 refugees). Together with non-registered persons, at present there are, according to estimates, more than 400,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vojvodina in the territory of Croatia.

The Republic of Croatia is no longer capable of accepting refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its economic stability has been seriously affected.

Banished from their homes, aware of the incessant plunder and destruction of their property in the UNPAs which they were forced to abandon under duress, the Croatian population are no longer ready to tolerate delays in the implementation of the peace-keeping operation in the territory of Croatia.

The Government of Croatia is holding, with utmost efforts, under control the swollen, now also partly destructive energy of the tens of thousands of sufferers who had to leave their homes because of aggression.

3. After the assumption of responsibility in all the four sectors (UNPAs) by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the process of demilitarization is proceeding at an uneven rate. The reasons are to be sought exclusively in the behaviour of the other side.

The behaviour of the occupation authorities in the UNPAs is focused exclusively on the establishment of their armed rule and further destruction of the property of the displaced Croatian population in order to delay their return. These actions are aimed at destabilizing Croatia (traffic arteries outside the UNPAs remain within heavy-weapon range; power supply and telecommunications, and water supply sources and systems are disrupted).

In the marginal areas of the UNPAs, distinctive provocations include the advancing of the aggressor's strongholds and renewed construction of fortifications, the transit of armed groups across UNPA borders, the thwarting and even the seizure of UNPROFOR checkpoints (the most recent example involves the taking over of control on the Danube bridge between Batina and Bezdan by the militia of the so-called Serbian Republic of Krajina).

If UNPROFOR does not have the mandate and the means to put an end to such behaviour of the aggressor, then their mandate should be expanded by a decision of the Security Council.

4. The Republic of Croatia urges the efficient implementation of UNPROFOR operations in accordance with the United Nations peace plan. In the view of the Republic of Croatia, one should immediately and selectively, in parallel with the process of demilitarization, set the deadline and start implementing the return of the displaced Croatian and other non-Serbian population to the UNPAs and to all the "pink zones".

The return to certain parts of the UNPAs especially in Sector East, settled before the war by Croats and Hungarians, is possible under international supervision. Such return should be provided for by no later than 30 September 1992, because of farming work, the start of the school year and the coming winter.

At the same time, the Republic of Croatia is ready, in cooperation with UNPROFOR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to prepare and implement the project of return of the Serbian population which had left the UNPA in Sector West. This return will additionally be stimulated by the envisaged abolition and amnesty to cover all those that were misled or forced to take part in armed action against the Republic of Croatia, and who have not perpetrated war crimes.

Return should start as soon as feasible to the "pink zones" and, selectively, to the areas of Sector East, to be followed by selective return to Sector West, and Sectors North and South.

5. The Republic of Croatia has met all the requirements laid down by the international community with regard to the assurance of ethnic rights to national minorities. The Republic of Croatia will provide all the conditions for the work of the representative of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe commissions for human rights. As a participant of the London Conference, the Republic of Croatia requests that Serbia, too, should respect The Hague and Brussels documents, CSCE documents, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions.

6. The Republic of Croatia proposes to the Security Council to urgently consider and enact decisions concerning the following requests:

(a) To request, in accordance with the Vance Plan and the respective agreements, the complete withdrawal of the so-called Yugoslav army from Dubrovnik and the surrounding region;

(b) To effect immediately the take-over of the Peruća hydropower plant, security to be provided for by UNPROFOR;

(c) To permit access to the Maslenica Strait, and the construction of the pontoon bridge, security to be provided by UNPROFOR;

(d) To permit the operation of the Adriatic Oil Pipeline, a facility not only of interest to Croatia but also to Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republic, and Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(e) To open the Zagreb-Slavonski Brod motorway, security to be provided for by UNPROFOR along the motorway section crossing the UNPA;

(f) To assure water supply for the Dalmatian region, and particularly for the Zadar area, and provide for the operation of the overhead power transmission system in order to ensure the supply of electricity to the Dalmatian region.

The implementation of all these requests will directly influence the course, speed and cost of the UNPROFOR peace operation. Let me note that all these requests are in accordance with the decisions reached at the London Conference. The solution of these problems could also facilitate the extension of mandate of the peace-keeping force to Bosnia and Herzegovina because the existing UNPROFOR, after the completion of their mission in Croatia, could be sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would reduce the overall cost of the UNPROFOR operation.

Zagreb, 9 September 1992

The President
of the Republic of Croatia

Dr. Franjo Tudman